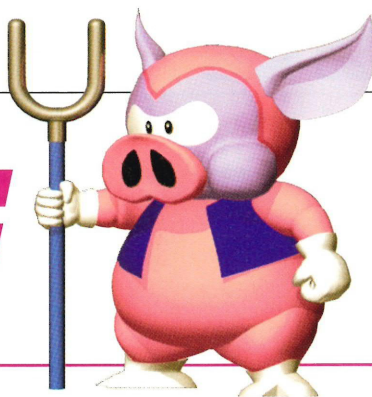


Tombi



Could it be, at last, someone has produced a platform game with depth?

They sure have...



[1] A lovely, lilac pig. You will be jumping on the back of these and then smashing them dead. [2] Eyes by Marty Feldman, trousers by the Incredible Hulk and barnet by Mrs Slocombe. Funny fellas, game designers... [3] Some games attack you with space robots. Tombi attacks you with laughing flowers.

It's good to see that, in these days of serious PlayStation releases, Sony can still throw in an oddball title every now and then. That said, calling *Tombi* oddball, is akin to calling Peter Sutcliffe "a bit naughty." It's bizarre throughout, with pig wrestling just one of its many unusual delights, and while it is ostensibly a platform game with puzzle overtones – the weird ideas and solid, progressive gameplay gel to create a significantly deeper platform title.

The game's titular hero, *Tombi*, is a pink-haired Neanderthal whose pastel-coloured home world has been overrun by pigs. The porcine invaders have invoked

TOMBI VALIDATES ITS PLAYSTATION EXISTENCE WITH MORE SECRETS THAN A DOZEN EPISODES OF MELROSE PLACE.

Tombi's wrath by stealing a precious gold bracelet, but our hero's initial plans for its retrieval open a much bigger can of worms. Via the wonders of animated scene setting we are told that, as opposed to normal pre-bacon porkers, *Tombi* is messing with the all-powerful Koma Pigs who are gathering as much gold as possible for some nefarious reason. Told you it was weird.

Tombi is an old-school platform game – the hero responds to a bare minimum of controls, and the large levels follow a linear formula. *Tombi* validates its PlayStation existence, though, with more secrets than a dozen episodes of *Melrose Place*, and graphical elements that raise it above similar side-viewed platform

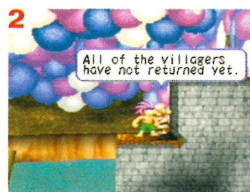
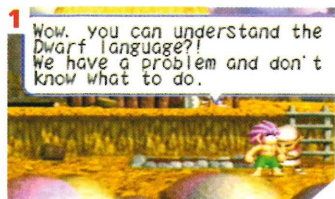


[1] Swing over the pink porky fellas to victory. [2 - 3] The balloons are your friends for they hold secret dwarves. Honest.





■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ DEVELOPER:	WhoopeeCamp
■ RELEASE DATE:	August	■ AGE RESTRICTIONS:	TBA
■ PRICE:	£34.99	■ STYLE:	Platform



[1] The useless dwarves speak their minds. [2] ...Which roughly translates as, "Get back and finish the damn level!" [3] Dangling pom poms. [4] The useless dwarves... And so on [5] Manga in almost watchable shocker!

efforts like *Heart of Darkness*. The play area is built around a pseudo 3D environment, with Tombi pegging it left and right, and diving in and out of the dual-plane locations. In order to overcome the piggy invaders, Tombi runs errands for locals who in turn, dish out useful items for the rest of the mission. The requests start off fairly simply (retrieving kidnapped birds or dwarves, for example) but later tasks gradually introduce new areas to the game map, drawing you into the

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strange yet somehow logical puzzle element which dominates the game. It is these missions that raise Tombi above similar PlayStation efforts. Each screen is stuffed with dangers ranging from man-eating plants, huge birds, and other such life-sapping hazards. Tombi is equipped with a mace to swing at such adversaries, and depressing the X button increases the power of each attack. There are no real surprises on offer within Tombi's range of moves, but control is effortless and, more importantly, kept to a couple of buttons. Swinging from small handholds, climbing or picking up objects is effortless, assisting the game's flow immeasurably. By far the best attack in Tombi's repertoire, though, is the aforementioned wrestling attack – not only does he jump on his victims' backs; he slams them into the floor to finish them off! Another one to file under nice touches.

At first glance, Tombi is far from impressive. It lacks the level of detail enjoyed by a lot of current PlayStation releases, but its cute graphics suit the off-the-wall content and plot perfectly. Similarly, Tombi is no rival to Crash Bandicoot in appearance, but can offer Naughty Dog's marsupial a run for its money in terms of ease of use. Tombi succeeds because it has all the playability of the simplest platform game, but gradually adds new ingredients to keep it fresh. There's a massive challenge to be had, and the scale of the game can only be appreciated as the Neanderthal reaches

the later missions. We'd seriously recommend even the most platform-weary owners give it a go. It would be a pity if it didn't get the recognition it deserved.

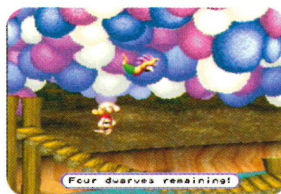
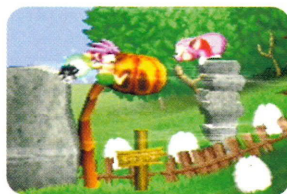
Steve Merrett



[1 - 2] Yet more beautifully-realised cartoon insanity.

HIDDEN DEPTHS

The beauty of Tombi is that surprises lie around every corner. Performing key acts has a knock-on effect which, in turn, opens up secondary missions. Cracking bird eggs releases chicks that should be returned to an old hermit, for example. This in turn pisses off the big red birds who stole the eggs in the first place and will now give chase if they see Tombi. Language skills are also picked up – albeit by biting the heads off dwarves to



VERDICT

- GRAPHICS: Gaudy, but slightly reminiscent of old Megadrive fare **7**
- GAMEPLAY: Like peeling an onion, multi-layered puzzles are revealed **8**
- LIFESPAN: More than enough to keep anyone happy **8**

Tombi's immediacy draws you in, but it is the constant and varied challenges that keep you hooked. A welcome surprise from Sony.

Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine

Alternatively...

<i>Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee</i>	9/10	PSM24
<i>Tombi</i>	8/10	PSM38
<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	7/10	PSM34
<i>Rayman</i>	7/10	PSM1
<i>Johnny Bazzooka</i>	6/10	PSM4

8
OUT OF 10